

Necropolis 1591

Chapter 1591: Pills That Know Combat Arts

“Medicinal properties, theory, and spirituality...? Who taught you all this?” The Alchemist Sovereign’s expression froze when he heard the young man’s response.

“This junior derived it myself,” Lu Yun answered truthfully. He did indeed lack a master when it came to supplemental dao.

His foundations came from his Yama Kings, his strength bolstered by the Tome of Life and Death, and it wasn’t until formula dao came into existence that his supplemental dao developed explosively.

Everything had been predicated upon formula dao and was derived as a result of it.

“Very well, I can give you a Principal Seventh Rank Lotus, but I wish to witness you refining the pill.” While the Alchemist Sovereign didn’t fully believe that Lu Yun could create a pill recipe containing the lotus, the young man’s mention of spirituality was enough to convince the sovereign to allow a try.

He’d also discovered spirituality in spirit roots, and that carefully cultivated spirit roots were somehow vastly different from their wild counterparts. The Alchemist Sovereign had employed a variety of comparison techniques to discover the spirituality within.

When he was certain of his findings, he requested authority over the eighth level of the treasury from Ah Zhi and created a world of spirit herbs, allowing plants to grow freely in this sphere and giving them free range.

The idea of spirituality in plants was a topic that circulated among a few old fellows like the Alchemist Sovereign; it wasn’t part of the general curriculum for the younger generation yet. Today, however, this Feng Feifan mentioned it without being prompted and could speak intelligently regarding medicinal properties, medicinal theory, and spirituality.

This wasn’t the regular bumbling from a child.

The sovereign didn’t suggest reviewing the pill recipe—the young man could refine a pill if he wanted to. I’ve ruined eight lotuses myself already, anyhow. He is destined for greatness if he comprehended the existence of spirituality by himself without tutelage from another. Wasting another Principal Seventh Rank Lotus is nothing in comparison.

“Of course!” Lu Yun agreed to the request. He felt another surge of emotion toward the Alchemist Sovereign, it was like he was with his master.

The elder called a lotus sparkling with seven colors to his hand and handed it to Lu Yun.

“Do you need a pill cauldron and fire?” he asked.

“No, thank you.” Lu Yun shook his head and manifested a silver flame with a flip of his hand—the connate flame of the Disordered Hell.

Since the Disordered Hell was derived from a Hongmeng pearl, it was also a real Hongmeng world. It was a fragment of the original Hongmeng at the same time, so it gave birth to numerous connate treasures when it formed a world.

The silver flame was one of its connate treasures and had taken on a silver cast due to influence from the disordered hellfire. Lu Yun had tamed it and now used it as his pill fire.

Whoosh whoosh whoosh!

The silver flame jumped and flickered into a silver pill cauldron.

"I would request that the senior also bestow a few spirit roots and spirit herbs upon this junior." Lu Yun rattled off a list of thirty-two spirit herbs and roots. With the lotus that he had in hand, that made for thirty-three ingredients in this pill recipe.

"This combination of ingredients..." The Alchemist Sovereign frowned slightly. With his title and being the foremost master of pill dao in the Star Sect, he could quickly draw some conclusions when Lu Yun made his request.

"Some of their properties are almost completely opposite of one another. They'll very likely detonate the cauldron if they meet in refinement." Baffled, the sovereign turned over the list in his mind again. Even a first step pill master wouldn't make this kind of mistake.

"Regular methods aren't able to refine the Principal Seventh Rank Lotus," Lu Yun explained. "The properties and theory behind these thirty-three ingredients can be reformed, so they won't necessarily blow up the cauldron."

The elder inclined his head and waved, calling thirty-two spirit roots and herbs into his hand. He handed them to the young man without further questions.

Possessing a personal pill fire and using it to craft a pill cauldron was proof enough that though this kid only possessed ninth step soul force, his mentality was already grandmaster. In fact, the Alchemist Sovereign felt that Feng Feifan should be eating that lotus instead of refining it.

"If he succeeds, his soul force will take another step forward and reach grandmaster level." The sovereign stroked his beard with a smile. "If he fails, I'll have him eat a lotus. His soul force is ninth step, but his mind is already at grandmaster. Doesn't the Principal Seventh Rank Lotus exist precisely for someone like him?"

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Lu Yun put the Alchemist Sovereign out of his mind and focused on refining his pill. He threw all of the ingredients into the cauldron at the same time.

Spirit roots were connate items that formed at the intersection of the fourth realm's rules and orders, whereas spirit herbs weren't connate plants. They were born in worlds that developed later on and they lacked spirituality, but their medicinal properties were so strong that they could complement spirit roots.

Lu Yun's cauldron contained a world. The thirty-three ingredients immediately disassembled when they entered it, were refined and distilled into the components that he wanted. Pill refinement hand seals

and gestures directed the operation of the pill cauldron as the Alchemist Sovereign was gradually entranced by the young man's process.

"Is this kid... actually the reborn soul of a powerful grandmaster?" The elder swallowed hard. "No, if he was, then his soul force would easily reach grandmaster level. He wouldn't have to go to the trouble of searching out a Principal Seventh Rank Lotus or refining an almost impossible pill..."

"His hand gestures also aren't the ones of a grandmaster—they achieve great results with minimal effort. To be able to deploy the effect of grandmaster soul force when he possesses only ninth level... Amazing, incredible!" The sovereign's mouth was going dry.

Boom!

Lu Yun's silver cauldron jerked with a dull roar as an intangible ripple spread out in all directions.

"Has he failed?" The elder's face fell. "No matter, any new pill recipe must undergo countless failures before it is—eh?"

His eyes widened and jaw dropped as the cauldron that should've been blown to smithereens transformed into a ball, over which radiance of seven colors shimmered as a magnificent wheel of light.

A black tribulation cloud appeared over Mount Buzhou.

"What's that kid gotten up to now to attract such a strong pill tribulation..." Ah Zhi stretched open bleary eyes, yawned, then went back to sleep.

The terrifying pill tribulation filtered through the mountain treasury and blasted Lu Yun's cauldron. Such tribulations appeared whenever heaven defying pills appeared in the fourth realm or Hongmeng and could not be rebuffed; the pills had to endure it themselves. Otherwise, their karmic repercussions would remain and disaster would befall whoever took them.

Thus, Lu Yun didn't absorb the tribulation with Thunder Palmstrike.

Kaboom!

The pill cauldron exploded, leaving behind seven pills glowing with seven colors hovering in the void. Explosions reverberated between them and gave rise to formless ripples through the air. Those ripples dispelled the black lightning before it had a chance to land.

"Those ripples... are combat arts! Pills can possess combat arts?!" The Alchemist Sovereign suddenly felt that he was a waste of his many years of life.

etvolare's Thoughts

Eh, don't be so hard on yourself old man. Not your fault you're encountering the MC halo.

Chapter 1592: Nine Million

The pill tribulation departed as quickly as it abruptly appeared. Clear skies returned to Mount Buzhou after roughly three hundred breaths.

"Principal Seventh Rank Pill greets the master! Please eat me, master!"

“Eat me, eat me first master!”

“You must eat me first, I’m sweeter than the other six!”

“No, I’m sweeter! Have a taste, master!”

Amid the Alchemist Sovereign’s awestruck gaze, the seven pills were now seven fat white dolls the size of a palm. They surrounded Lu Yun and argued loudly to be the first to be eaten.

“What kind of monster is this kid...” The elder couldn’t believe his eyes. With his level of cultivation, he could naturally tell that these dolls weren’t living beings. They lacked souls, but there was spirituality present in their bodies.

“Alright, alright, pipe down, the seven of you,” Lu Yun lectured. “You are the first Principal Seventh Rank Pills to appear in the Boundless Planes, making you the ancestors of your kind. You should behave in a way that befits your station.”

The seven fat dolls blinked and stopped jumping up and down. They stood meekly in front of Lu Yun, listening to his instructions.

“Understood!” they responded respectfully.

“Feng Feifan... Fellow daoist, have you become a grandmaster?” The Alchemist Sovereign walked up and addressed Lu Yun by a new title.

“I’ve broken through and am a real grandmaster now,” Lu Yun answered happily. He couldn’t wait to claim a soul weapon!

His breakthrough had been as gentle and mild as the spring rains, raising no disturbance after the Principal Seventh Rank Pills formed. There was a massive soul force vortex in the center of his consciousness—a sign of a grandmaster.

Since his mindset was already that of a grandmaster, he’d been able to instantly suppress the vortex when it formed. Thus, it hadn’t given rise to any disruptions. That he’d been able to refine a pill out of the Principal Seventh Rank Lotus meant that he was worthy of being the Alchemist Sovereign’s “fellow daoist”, even if he was only in the true void realm.

All the same, the sovereign still tread ahead of Lu Yun when it came to pill dao.

“This is the pill recipe.” Lu Yun tucked the recipe into the elder’s hand. “But there are probably only six lotuses left in all of the Boundless Planes...”

“That is of no matter.” A merry Alchemist Sovereign quickly waved the concern away. “Since we have the recipe, we can simply use the Principal Seventh Rank Lotus’ properties and theory to create more pills. At most, we’ll fail to refine these seven dolls again since we’ll lack spirituality in our ingredients.”

“Then I give these seven pills and recipe over to the senior. Ah, Xing Wuliang is my good friend and his soul force has reached grandmaster level. He’s lacking a bit in mentality, so I would request that senior look after him a little bit,” Lu Yun remarked.

“Xing Shenzuo’s disciple?” The elder blinked, then nodded. “As these seven pills already possess spirit, they only need a bit more nurturing before they’ll be able to coalesce souls and become true living beings. It would be a pity if he ate them. ...but if that old lad Formation Sovereign is willing to lend a hand, we can have these seven fellows manifest their effects in a pill formation. Hmm hmm...”

“Then I entrust everything to the senior. Um... this junior takes his leave.” Lu Yun’s mind was completely refocused on soul weapons. He’d be able to truly peek into the supplemental dao of the fourth realm once he wielded one.

For some reason, he had a feeling that the true dao of the fourth realm should be supplemental dao—or rather, the path of cultivating soul force. If one trained in nothing and became a Nihil World Sovereign, then fail to activate sequence, the one might truly become nothing and vanish without a trace.

The Alchemist Sovereign didn’t keep Lu Yun since he knew what the young man was preoccupied with.

“Soul weapons are no trifling matter, they are most important to the Star Sect. All of them are kept on the ninth floor. If fellow daoist is able to access it, you can go select one for yourself.”

“Alright!” Lu Yun nodded and disappeared with a turn.

“He should be a Nihil World Sovereign too, but why does he appear to only be a true void cultivator?” The elder rubbed his nose with bafflement after the young man left.

“Attend to me, all of you are now my disciples! I will teach you some combat arts so you are able to protect yourselves!” Happiness quickly chased the confusion out of his mind when his thoughts returned to the seven pills in front of him.

“We know combat arts!” replied the biggest of the pills. A ripple furiously oscillated over its body and sent an unprepared Alchemist Sovereign flying backward.

Shocked, the old man quickly recalled that these seven little fellows could release combat arts and defeat a pill tribulation when they were still pills.

“This combat art... seems to be the strength of some spirit herbs conflicting with spirit roots. Did Feng Feifan choose the thirty-two plants not to be supplemental ingredients, but to craft combat arts for these seven little guys?” Another immense shift rocked the sovereign’s worldview.

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There were only soul weapons on the treasury’s ninth floor, nothing else. For a sect like the Star Sect, soul weapons were the most important treasure they possessed.

Soul weapons enabled supplemental grandmasters to command combat strength. They could deploy enormous force in fights even if they didn’t use their supplemental arts, thereby shoring up a major weakness of supplemental cultivators.

There were eight major soul weapons in the fourth realm—Profound Pagoda, Divine Evince, Serene Annex, Domain of Mountain and Rivers, Lunar Pivot, Aureate Wind, Argent Snow, and Azure Fog.

They were the eight peaks of supplemental dao and constantly illustrated the truth of everything in this part of existence. It was said that a supplemental grandmaster would be able to access sequence if they could completely comprehend the truth and dao in any of the soul weapons.

Multiple copies existed of the eight soul weapons, and soul weapons as a whole were incredibly rare in the fourth realm. Even the Star Sect placed them on the highest floor of their treasury. Only geniuses who were grandmaster in both soul force and mind had the right to choose a weapon from this floor. It required personal strength, not fortuitous opportunity, to obtain the recognition of a soul weapon.

Their makers were long lost to history and impossible to determine. There didn't seem to be anyone in the Boundless Planes who could refine them anymore. They were all legacies from an extremely ancient era.

While there were eight types of soul weapons, the Star Sect only possessed four—Profound Pagoda, Serene Annex, Lunar Pivot, and Argent Snow.

Lu Yun ignored the other three when he arrived at the ninth floor and made straight for Argent Snow. It looked like a silver stick roughly one meter long and was as thick as a thumb. Strange patterns were carved over it and one of the sticks landed in his hand when he reached forward.

"I see!" Lu Yun attempted to discern its refinement method with formula dao, only to discover that it wasn't man made at all.

A major powerhouse had opened the door to sequence and formed the weapon with its rules. Hence, this soul weapon was nigh indestructible.

There were nine million sticks of Argent Snow in the Boundless Planes. Although that seemed to be a large number, there were more than hundreds of millions of Nihil World Sovereigns in the fourth realm. Thus, there were fewer instances of the weapon than even the most elite cultivators of the realm.

Chapter 1593: The Soul Weapon of the Sword Clan

"You shouldn't choose Argent Snow," a familiar voice sounded behind Lu Yun. He turned around to see that Xing Chen had arrived at some point in time.

He tilted his head, discovering that the formidable Nihil World Sovereign was... a child? She'd taken the appearance of a seventeen year old young woman last time he saw her, but this time, she looked to be even younger.

She seemed to be only twelve years old and had the most charming features. Apart from her frosty expression, she appeared just like a porcelain doll.

"Why do you... look like this?" Tongue-tied, Lu Yun stared at Xing Chen.

Her face darkened noticeably and she grumbled, "This is the ninth floor of the Mount Buzhou treasury. All beings can only appear in their true form unless your strength and cultivation level exceeds the Star Sovereign King's."

She was immensely dissatisfied and highly suspected that Ah Zhi had created this rule specifically for her. After her cultivation deviated one time in her youth, her true external appearance had been held at

twelve years old ever since. She'd tried numerous ways to reverse the change, but nothing was successful in facilitating her growth.

Though Xing Chen now stood at the peak of Nihil World Sovereign and was about to activate sequence, she still looked like a twelve year old child.

Her appearance was sure to invite jokes and laughter—while no one would dare make fun of her to her face, she'd changed her appearance with illusions nonetheless.

"I see." Lu Yun looked down at himself. His Shapeshifting death art was still active and he remained in the form of Feng Feifan. It wasn't that his strength was greater than Ah Zhi's, but that death arts were so wondrous they'd changed his body structure for the disguise.

The Feng Feifan of the mythological realm had been a replica that Lu Yun created from a heaven defying treasure and severed karmic ties with. When his past self transformed into a dao fruit, Feng Feifan had naturally crumbled away to dust.

With Lu Yun being Feng Feifan at the moment, the rules within the treasury didn't affect his appearance.

"Alright, let's cut the nonsense. You should choose the Profound Pagoda." Xing Chen changed the subject. Though she tried to keep the usual arctic tones in her voice, her words still carried a trace of languid sweetness as befitting a twelve year old child.

"Don't you dare laugh! The pagoda is the first of the eight soul weapons. If you're strong enough, that's the one you should pick." Xing Chen almost erupted with outrage when she looked at Lu Yun's beet red face. He was flushed with the exertion of holding his amusement in.

"I have the Profound Pagoda already." He brought out the Army Pagoda with a flip of his hand.

"Is that... the legendary Army Pagoda?" Xing Chen blinked. "But the rules within it have changed and it's no longer a soul weapon.

"Well, since you have the Army Pagoda, it would indeed be inappropriate to choose another Profound Pagoda. Then you should take Lunar Pivot," she thought for a moment. "Or Serene Annex."

"Why not Argent Snow?" Lu Yun frowned. He was already holding it in his hand and had subdued it. He only needed to infuse it with his soul force to use it.

"The sect possesses the complete legacies and battle methods of the other three weapons. Only Argent Snow lacks anything other than the weapon," Xing Chen explained. "We also only have ten of them—I got them when I destroyed another sect. It's not one of our own inheritances.

"The only person who is better skilled with it is Xing Mochou's head disciple, Xing Heng. He's part of the remnants of the sect I destroyed and he joined us for revenge."

Having interrogated the traitorous disciple, she now knew everything about him. She'd already executed him and scattered his soul upon the wind. Anyone who joined the Star Sect with such ulterior motives would meet with the same ignoble end.

“Since he’s one of the remnants of that sect, you should be able to search his mind for information about Argent Snow, no?” Lu Yun was a bit surprised that Xing Chen didn’t mention the destroyed sect’s name. There were some other things at play here that he plainly wasn’t privy to.

“No.” Xing Chen shook her head. “I felt it was too much of a hassle and just killed him.”

“And you don’t think coming to persuade me is too much of a hassle?” Lu Yun blurted out.

She raked him with a frosty look. “The Star Sovereign King is too lazy to come, so she sent me instead. This is incredibly annoying. Just take it if you’re not willing to switch to another.” She left without further ado.

Lu Yun rubbed his forehead and looked at Xing Chen’s departing back, then at Argent Snow in his hand. Though he was a Nihil World Sovereign and skilled in formula dao, soul weapons were too powerful and versatile. He did indeed need one with a heritage that he could study.

An Argent Snow without a background would be less useful than the Profound Pagoda, Serene Annex, or Lunar Pivot.

“Which one should I choose?” His head was starting to ache. Argent Snow was most suited to him out of the four soul weapons, but his current mastery of formula dao couldn’t derive anything about its specific uses.

“Xing Heng used its Domain of First Snowfall to pierce through the worlds that I projected from the Metal and Water Virtue Orbs...”

It was the first time in his life to be so indecisive as he didn’t know what to do. Soul weapons were more than just a tool, they were also a cultivation path from which there could be no turning back.

“Argent Snow it is!” He grit his teeth and banished all other thoughts. His first choice had been Argent Snow, so he should follow his gut and hold true to his first inclination.

He infused his soul force into Argent Snow.

Hmmmm.

Silver snowflakes drifted through the void—one hundred and eight in total. This was the first stage out of three in its domains. The snowflakes could be shaped into swords, formations, and talismans.

“Since you’ve chosen Argent Snow, you can visit Ingress Sword Island. There may be its legacy there. And, the sect I destroyed was one established by the Sword Clan. Argent Snow is one of their soul weapons,” came Xing Chen’s voice laden with schadenfreude. “However, you’re a Star Sect disciple. That Her Sovereign Majesty permits you to come to the ninth level means you have the right to access it, but privilege and obligation go hand in hand. Since you’ve obtained Argent Snow, you’re in charge of finding its inheritance.”

Lu Yun:

“That... was on purpose!” he chuckled ruefully. “What a nice show of push and pull! She wasn’t here to persuade me to give up Argent Snow, but to make sure I would choose it and search out its legacy!

“If Ingress Sword Island doesn’t have it, she probably wants me to go search among the Sword Clan. But I would’ve gone even without this!”

The forefather of the Sword Clan was Quiet.

Chapter 1594: A Den of Ghosts

A round of push and pull had solidified Lu Yun’s determination to choose Argent Snow, resulting in a mission to retrieve its legacy and cultivation methods for the Star Sect.

He wasn’t opposed to this as he was now as a sect disciple. When he’d overseen the Dao Academy in the world of immortals, he’d often used similar methods to reward his disciples. A sect could nurture disciples and give them resources that most suited them if they possessed the appropriate potential. At the same time, however, disciples must work for the benefit of the sect.

Only then did a positive feedback cycle form.

But from this, Lu Yun could tell that Ah Zhi had kept his background and many other things about him from Xing Chen. All the world sovereign knew was that he’d shaken off his destiny and forged his own path.

The young man smiled and put Argent Snow away, then left the treasury.

He returned to closed door cultivation in his nameless abode. This time, he focused on training with his soul weapon instead of the legacies of the original Hongmeng and Dragonquake Scripture.

“Though the Three Thousand Soul Daos are the most basic soul force cultivation method in the fourth realm, it’s a jack of all trades.”

All sects and factions had their own ways for cultivating soul force; the strongest eight schools of thought were derived from the eight soul weapons. Only when practicing the proper soul force method could one wield the corresponding soul weapon.

Of course, there were always exceptions. The Three Thousand Soul Daos applied to all schools of thought. Those who practiced it could later specialize in any soul weapon, so many sects and factions used it as their fundamental soul force method.

There were three major soul weapon legacies in the Star Sect—the Profound Method, Serene Method, and Lunar Method.

Argent Snow wasn’t a Star Sect weapon, but if Lu Yun could obtain its method, the sect’s strength would take a momentous step forward.

“There are three major domains in Argent Snow—Domain of First Snowfall, of Glorious Snowdrift, and of Eventide Snow. But these three domains are just surface-level knowledge. The truly powerful requires the soul weapon’s method to unlock.”

Leveraging the Three Thousand Soul Daos, Lu Yun easily accessed the three major domains. This was a depth that had eluded even the sect master of the sect that Xing Chen had destroyed.

Despite that, he wasn’t satisfied with this level of strength.

“Xing Chen purposefully suggested I visit Ingress Sword Island because she knows I’m connected to them. I think I should visit the sect she destroyed first... The Sword Clan established it.” Lu Yun rose to his feet and walked out of the residence.

“Junior brother Feifan!” Xing Wuliang greeted him as soon as he emerged. He brimmed with joy and there was a short silver staff in his hand—another soul weapon.

Apart from the Profound Pagoda in the shape of a pagoda, all of the other soul weapons appeared as a one meter long staff.

“Congratulations to senior brother on truly reaching grandmaster and obtaining a soul weapon!” Lu Yun laughed heartily.

“It’s all thanks to the venerable Alchemist Sovereign. He used a marvelous formation to raise my mentality to the proper level.” A merry Xing Wuliang bounded up to Lu Yun and winked at him. “You’re quite something, junior brother, to refine even a Principal Seventh Rank Lotus into a pill. But you can’t tell others about this, or you’ll attract fatal attention.”

Lu Yun started.

“If you can refine the Principal Seventh Rank Lotus, that means you can refine other taboo spirit roots. Any sequence expert will covet your skill, so the venerable Alchemist Sovereign will be making sure that no word gets out about this. He wanted me to pass the message along because we are on good terms,” Xing Wuliang conveyed mysteriously.

Lu Yun blinked, then nodded. Formula dao was not yet popularized in the fourth realm, but it could still theorize all things. That was indeed worthy of attention from sequence experts.

“Ah, also, don’t go wandering around outside either. Xing Lingkong of Jade Mountain wants to beat you up to salvage senior sister Xing Lan’s dignity,” Xing Wuliang continued.

“Just... just because I didn’t invite her in? He wants to beat me up because of that??” Lu Yun didn’t really understand how this Xing Lingkong’s brain worked. It’d be bad if he had invited Xing Lan in, no?

“Then why isn’t he here yet?” Lu Yun asked.

“He doesn’t know where you are, haha! I wouldn’t have found your residence either if I didn’t ask master,” Xing Wuliang chuckled wryly. Who would make this place off the beaten path their residence? If it wasn’t for the fact that fourth realm denizens didn’t make use of qi, this area would be labeled as completely barren.

“...he wants to beat me up on Xing Lan’s behalf, but she didn’t tell me where I am?” Lu Yun was taken aback.

“No... In fact, she hung him up and gave him a beating. Xing Lingkong seems to hate you even more after that.”

Lu Yun:

“My soul force has reached grandmaster level and I want to seek out some trials. Do you want to come with me?” Lu Yun couldn’t be bothered with such ridiculous trivialities. The fourth realm was still

extremely foreign to him, so he needed a guide if he wanted to stretch his legs. Xing Wuliang had been journeying through the realm and tempering himself, so it would be quite advantageous to bring him along.

“That’s perfect!” The man brightened. “We can avoid Xing Lingkong that way.”

Lu Yun’s expression darkened slightly. “Do you think it’s that inevitable he’ll beat me up?”

“He was the foremost disciple of the entire sect in his time. If it wasn’t for senior sister Xing Lan’s sudden appearance, he’d be the one beating up everyone,” explained Xing Wuliang. “He didn’t fight back when she hung him up either, probably because he knew the truth about her a long time ago. He purposefully gave up the position of head disciple.”

“I see.” Lu Yun nodded. “Let’s head out, then. Sovereign Chen obtained Argent Snow from a sect she destroyed back in the day, do you know which one?”

“What are you asking about that for? Did you choose Argent Snow??” Xing Wuliang’s eyes widened.

“Yep, that’s the one.” Lu Yun waved the silver staff in his hand.

“The Snowsword School!” came the immediate reply. “It’s not a supplemental dao sect, but a sword sect created by the Sword Clan.

“I don’t know why Sovereign Chen destroyed it, but I recommend you give up on the idea of finding Argent Snow’s legacy in its ruins. It’s become a den of ghosts and the Star Sect’s lost ten Nihil World Sovereigns there already. That’s why we forewent the idea of finding the weapon’s inheritance.” Xing Wuliang shook his head. “It’s too dangerous. It’s infinitely more dangerous than the Tomb of the Hallowed Emperor.”

“Oh?” Lu Yun paused in contemplation. Xing Chen had indeed not directed him to the ruins of the Snowsword School, instead wanting him to go to Ingress Sword Island or even the Sword Clan. She didn’t tell me the faction’s name because she didn’t want me to take the risk, but why has it turned into a den of ghosts?

Does it have something to do with why Xing Chen destroyed the faction?

If there was anything he wasn’t afraid of, it was ghosts.

“You’re not really going to the Snowsword Sect, are you?” Xing Wuliang asked carefully as he studied Lu Yun’s expression.

“We’re going!” Lu Yun nodded. “Since I train with Argent Snow, I need to find its legacy.”

He wasn’t planning on going to Ingress Sword Island just yet. He didn’t know its true state of affairs—whether it’d been corrupted or deviated from its original purpose. He’d already sent them Immortal’s End. If they harbored ulterior motives, then not only him, but also Daoist Ingress would be in danger.

It might even drag in the world of immortals.

“If you’re not planning on traveling with me, you can tell me what you know about the sect,” Lu Yun said.

“Fine then, it doesn’t look like I can talk you out of it,” Xing Wuliang responded with resignation. “I’ll go with you. My master once visited that den of ghosts and was lucky enough to survive. I’ve read his notes, so I should be of some help.”

“That’s perfect, let us be on our way!” Lu Yun smiled and happily accepted his offer. If there were only ghosts in the sect ruins, they would still come under the Tome of Life and Death’s sway.

Now that Lu Yun’s soul force was grandmaster level, his usage of the book had entered an entirely new level. He also didn’t need to hold anything back like he had in the Tomb of the Hallowed Emperor. If he met with an overwhelming enemy, all he needed to do was to immediately utilize the six hellfires.

“Where do you think you’re going, junior brothers?” A figure appeared in front of Lu Yun.

Chapter 1595: A Lazy Bunch

A man in snowy white robes with black hair flowing over his shoulders addressed the two. Dashing grace danced between the brows of his handsome face, and he regarded Lu Yun with a bit of curiosity.

“Xing Lingkong!” Xing Wuliang’s expression shifted when he saw the white-robed man.

“Congratulations to junior brother Wuliang for becoming a real grandmaster. With that, I think junior sister Xing Lan won’t beat you up in the future,” chuckled Xing Lingkong when he saw Xing Wuliang and the Lunar Pivot in his hand.

Xing Wuliang’s face darkened. Blatant humiliation! While the other’s words sounded like compliments, they were actually thinly veiled jeers.

“Though you’ve become a grandmaster, you’re still a major World Manifest. There is an incredible difference between a grandmaster at the World Manifest level and one at the Void World King level. Such as…”

Whoosh!

Xing Lingkong vanished and reappeared, sending Xing Wuliang flying.

“I can kill you before you move Lunar Pivot, so don’t think you’re invincible after you’ve become a grandmaster and wield a soul weapon.” Xing Lingkong finally turned his full attention to Lu Yun.

The young man hadn’t moved at all during this time; he remained blithely unconcerned when Xing Wuliang flew through the air.

Xing Lingkong’s actions were correct.

Xing Wuliang was a highly self-assured individual. Though he’d conversed with Lu Yun the first time the two met, he hadn’t wanted to befriend a mere stranger. He’d even addressed unknown Void World Kings as his fellow daoist.

Now that he was a grandmaster, his cockiness soared to the heavens. Lu Yun had planned to knock him down a peg or two during their trip to the Snowsword Sect. Thankfully, Xing Lingkong was one step ahead—a very beneficial development for Xing Wuliang’s character.

“Is junior brother traveling to the Snowsword Sect to search for Argent Snow’s heritage?” Xing Lingkong smiled at Lu Yun.

“Are you here to beat me up?” Lu Yun blinked. Surprisingly, he didn’t sense any malice from their visitor

“Beat you up? What for? Just because you didn’t invite junior sister Xing Lan in?” The man’s grin broadened. “My jealousy would overflow only if you had invited her in. Don’t listen to those who wish to stir up trouble.”

Lu Yun nodded. He’d felt it a bit strange and exaggerated when Su He spoke of Xing Lingkong’s anger. It now seemed that this would-be conflict was fabricated entirely by people who wanted a show. He didn’t know what kind of person Xing Lingkong was, but Lu Yun rather enjoyed watching him discipline Xing Wuliang.

He’d been worrying over how exactly to bring Xing Wuliang down to the ground on their impending trip.

Brooding ominously, Xing Wuliang struggled up from the ground and glared at Xing Lingkong.

“Just you wait, Xing Lingkong, I’ll—”

“Shh, don’t talk tough or I might not be able to control the urge to beat you.” Xing Lingkong smiled at the man. “I’ve already passed the eighty-first trial level of the third domain in Soul Dominion and accessed the third level of my soul weapon. You’ll have to work hard if you want revenge, junior brother. Otherwise, it will remain out of your reach for your entire life.”

A vein throbbed in Xing Wuliang’s forehead.

Lu Yun discovered something odd about their exchange—Xing Wuliang seemed to regard Xing Lingkong with pronounced enmity. Although the latter was picking on Xing Wuliang, he’d been the foremost disciple of the Star Sect at one point. However, Xing Wuliang never once addressed him as senior brother.

He was fuming silently after those last words.

“How about this. You’ve just obtained your soul weapon, junior brother. If you can pass the twenty-seventh floor of the first domain in Soul Dominion within a hundred years, I’ll release your senior brother Xing Hun.

“But if you can’t, that will be proof that you’re nothing but trash. I’ll beat you up whenever I see you in the future.” Xing Lingkong lifted his chin.

“Very well!” Xing Wuliang forced out through grit teeth. “If I can pass the twenty-seventh floor of the first domain in Soul Dominion within a hundred years, not only will you have to release senior brother Xing Hun, but you’ll have to kneel in front of Shenzuo Mountain and apologize to my master!”

“If you can pass,” Xing Lingkong chuckled.

“Junior brother Feifan, I’m afraid I can’t join you on your trip anymore...” Xing Wuliang turned to Lu Yun.

“No matter.” Lu Yun waved him off.

Xing Wuliang glared at Xing Lingkong one final time before leaving.

“So... uh... what just happened here?” Lu Yun asked blankly.

“The unfortunate consequences of our sect seniors being a lazy bunch,” Xing Lingkong laughed ruefully. “All of the Nihil World Sovereigns under the Star Sovereign King are lazy slugs. They spend their days either sleeping or focusing on their great dao. Very few are those who are willing to put in the effort to educate the sect’s disciples.

“Thus, responsibility for teaching the younger generation sadly falls to those of us who are more senior.

“Star Sect recruitment centers on potential and perception. Thus, sect disciples only need a little bit of prodding to walk their paths to great effect. It so happens that the best way to motivate people is to beat them up.

“They’ll exert themselves in cultivation if they don’t want to suffer a beating. Their eventual goal is to beat others up and avoid being a punching bag. After all, it’s not like we can explain our own dao to our juniors,” Xing Wuliang frowned with frustration. “We can only push them to cultivate and derive their own path. Back in my time, I was also hung up and beaten by my senior brothers.”

“So now you beat people with extra fervor?” Lu Yun recalled how the young disciples of Shenzuo Mountain had complained to Xing Wuliang when they first arrived. They were immensely woeful that senior brother Wuchou of Mochou Mountain had paid them many visits.

Xing Lan’s replica had slapped Xing Wuliang across the face in front of the sect’s front doors, leaving his dignity in tattered shreds.

The various libraries and treasuries of the sect are open to all that the rules determine have the right to enter. The eligible can enter at any time to peruse books or take treasures. This design might actually not be a case of laziness from the Nihil World Sovereigns. They’re still probably giving hints or pointers to their own disciples.

But Ah Zhi is seriously lazy.

An image of sleepy Ah Zhi and her bleary eyes floated to the forefront of Lu Yun’s mind. It was highly likely that her personal inclinations had caused the sect’s culture to develop in such a way. The rule that Star Sect disciples had to take care of their own trouble in the outside world, even upon pain of death, was probably another result of Ah Zhi’s laziness.

The foremost Nihil World Sovereign of the Star Sect—Xing Chen—also seemed to hate hassle.

Thus, tradition gradually formed from the tone set at the top.

However, that coincidentally proved to be a winning combination as geniuses abounded in the sect and the Star Sect showed no signs of decline. Lu Yun would never dare execute the same strategy in the Dao Academy. That would just be courting death.

The Star Sect was this way because Ah Zhi was so strong that her rules affected the entire World Plane. She was the reason why the sect didn’t collapse from such lackadaisical attitudes, and plentiful resources why the greatly suffering younger generation didn’t form any death feuds or rebel.

If it’d been anywhere else in the Boundless Realms, hate and bitterness would’ve abounded in pointed struggles throughout the faction.

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“As for the Xing Hun we mentioned, he was a stunning genius at first, but he developed the seniors’ bad habits before he grew into his own. He doesn’t yet have the right to be so lazy, but he’s accustomed to being lazy. I had no choice but to suppress him with cultivation rules and force him to train.” Xing Lingkong rubbed his nose. “Since his master Xing Shenzuo is also very lazy, I didn’t give much thought to his dignity...”

“I understand now.” Lu Yun nodded. “Do you want to beat me up too, senior brother?”

“That depends on your strength, junior brother, and if you cultivate diligently,” Xing Lingkong responded solemnly. “The ones we beat up are those who have great potential, but are relaxed about cultivation. Though they know why they’re being beaten up, who cares about that when a fist is actually meeting their face?”

“Ah, wait.” Xing Lingkong suddenly slapped his forehead. “I almost forgot the real reason why I’m here. Do you also train with Argent Snow, junior brother Feifan?”

“Yes.” Lu Yun brightened. “Senior brother...?”

“As do I, but there is no heritage for the soul weapon in our sect. I’ve trained with it for three hundred million years and have some reflections after my time. I’m here with orders to share them with you.”

Three hundred million years was an impossibly long period of time to the world of immortals, but didn’t account for much to fourth realm denizens. It also wasn’t a lengthy period of time to Xing Lingkong since he was a Void World King. In fact, he was an unequivocal genius to spend only three hundred million years to reach his cultivation level and access the third level of Argent Snow’s domains.

“Oh yes, did you say that you were going to visit the Snowsword Sect ruins, junior brother?” Xing Lingkong recalled what the two had been discussing before he’d arrived.

Lu Yun’s eyes lit up again. Though Xing Lingkong was just a Void World King, his mastery of supplemental dao and cultivation of soul force exceeded Lu Yun’s. His understanding and comprehension of Argent Snow was also superior. If he received Xing Lingkong’s reflections, he would be able to avoid a lot of wasted effort.

“Indeed, I want to go there to see if I can find anything about Argent Snow’s heritage.” Lu Yun nodded frankly.

“Then I’ll go with you!” Xing Lingkong immediately offered. “I’ve wanted to go there for a very long time.”

Chapter 1596: Trials in Soul Dominion

“You want to go with me?” Lu Yun started. “But this is a highly dangerous trip and apparently the ruins have turned into a den of ghosts.”

He wasn’t familiar with Xing Lingkong and subconsciously didn’t want to expose any of his trump cards to the man. If Lu Yun were to choose between Xing Wuliang and Xing Lingkong, he’d rather choose the former, even though Xing Wuliang was much weaker.

“You don’t trust me, do you, junior brother?” Xing Lingkong was highly quick on the uptake and easily read Lu Yun’s mood, especially as the young man wasn’t hiding anything.

Lu Yun would never trust someone he’d just met, no matter if the other was a threat or not. It was an instinctual reaction to not trust strangers, even if the stranger had just done something for him.

Lu Yun nodded in a natural motion.

Xing Lingkong chuckled ruefully. “Alright then, it’s not a bad idea for junior brother to cultivate for a period of time first. It’d be best if you can pass the first domain of Soul Dominion before you do anything else.”

He didn’t care to linger around after being outright rejected; Xing Lingkong turned on his heel and left. He could go himself if Feng Feifan didn’t want to go with him. While the ruins were dangerous, the Star Sect hadn’t forbidden its disciples from traveling there.

Lu Yun sank into deep thought as he watched the man leave.

“Compared to Xing Wuliang, Xing Lingkong does indeed play the part of the sect’s foremost senior brother better.” The reflections that Xing Lingkong had given him were incredibly valuable. Though Lu Yun was stronger than him in terms of absolute strength, he was far behind the other when it came to supplemental dao. After all, the latter had trained for three hundred million years. In comparison, Lu Yun’s experience didn’t even add up to a rounding error.

His plan to head to the Snowsword Sect was thus put on hold as he also wanted to test himself against the famed Soul Dominion cultivation grounds.

Soul Dominion was a cultivation locale specifically for soul force cultivators. The stronger one’s grasp and the deeper one’s understanding of the craft, the further one would progress through it.

Though Lu Yun could activate the three domains of Argent Snow, he wouldn’t make it very far through Soul Dominion with his current level of comprehension.

“I need to meditate in closed door cultivation first.” He returned to his nameless abode so he could carefully peruse the notes that Xing Lingkong had gifted him.

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“Finally. He’s finally not going anywhere.” Up in the air, Xing Chen surreptitiously wiped away a bead of sweat rolling down her forehead. “I only wanted him to go to Ingress Sword Island or search for Argent Snow’s legacy among the Sword Clan. He could also strengthen our ties with them at the same time. But the kid wants to go to the Snowsword Sect? Would I have destroyed those bastards if they possessed Argent Snow’s heritage?”

She’d annihilated them because they’d long since turned into a den of demons and devoured countless planes from the shadows. After she razed the corrupted Snowsword Sect, it dissolved into a nest of ghosts. The Star Sect’s Nihil World Sovereigns hadn’t headed to the ruins to search for Argent Snow’s heritage, but to completely wipe out the remnants of the Snowsword Sect.

For that, the Star Sect paid a heavy price.

While the ruins remained a nest of ghosts, the ghosts were sealed inside and couldn't rampage through the realm. The public remained oblivious of the truth, just as incorrect rumors had immediately swirled when Lu Yun declined to invite Xing Lan in. That had been the start of Xing Lingkong supposedly wanting to teach Lu Yun a lesson on Xing Lan's behalf.

And then, the entire sect became wrapped up in the nonsense.

General knowledge about Argent Snow's heritage being present in the Snowsword Sect's ruins had grown in a similar fashion. The demise of several Nihil World Sovereigns had been viewed through the lens of sect experts searching for the soul weapon's inheritance in the faction's ruins.

Though sect powerhouses later clarified the proper course of events, widespread belief declined to embrace their words. Additionally, the seniors' habits meant that one explanation was all they would give. They didn't care if others believed them. Thus, a dangerous land of ghosts morphed into the location of Argent Snow's heritage.

Influenced by this general belief, Lu Yun firmly believed the same. His notions were reinforced after conversing with Xing Wuliang and Xing Lingkong.

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Ten years passed by in the blink of an eye. To fourth realm cultivators, ten years were the span of a finger snap. Their order of time denoted that one major cycle revolution marked one year—a similar rule to what was present in the various worlds and Hongmengs of the fourth realm.

The order of one major cycle ruled the realm.

"I've done it!" Lu Yun opened his eyes with a smile.

Ten years of meditation and simulation, combined with Xing Lingkong's reflections, enabled him to perfect the methods of the first three domains in Argent Snow. In the same vein, his soul force and cultivation had taken noticeable leaps forward over the past ten years.

His true cultivation had reached true nihil realm from true void realm. What was meant by "true cultivation" was the strength that he could deploy in the Hongmeng. Though that had nothing to do with the fourth realm, it was what he truly commanded without the aid of the Tome of Life and Death.

A stronger self meant more solid foundations, otherwise he would never feel on even footing despite being a Nihil World Sovereign. Now that his true cultivation was in the true nihil realm, his strength as a Nihil World Sovereign also rose by thirty percent.

"Let's go to Soul Dominion now and see how far I can get!" Anticipation blossomed in Lu Yun's heart to think of his upcoming challenge.

Soul Dominion was a special realm of trial created by numerous rules. Legend had it that the creators of the eight soul weapons had shaped it with a world of rules. It wasn't in the Star Sect as any faction in the Boundless Realms with the heritage of a soul weapon could communicate with it.

There was a Hall of Soul Dominion in Mount Buzhou through which Star Sect disciples could access the realm. However, only those who trained with one of the eight soul weapons could enter the hall and Soul Dominion.

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“Senior brother Wuliang.” Lu Yun bumped into Xing Wuliang at the doors to the hall.

“You haven’t gone to Snowsword Sect yet, junior brother?” Xing Wuliang blinked to see the young man.

“I’ve been in seclusion and studying a few methods that senior brother Xing Lingkong gave me. How are you, senior brother?” Though Lu Yun had completely outstripped Xing Wuliang, he still called the man senior brother. The latter was the one who’d brought Lu Yun into the Star Sect, just as Xing Hun had originally recruited Xing Wuliang.

“I’ve just broken through the tenth level of the first domain.” A smile curved Xing Wuliang’s lips. “At this pace, it won’t be impossible to clear the first domain within a hundred years! My latest attempt gave me some inspiration, so I’m going back to closed door cultivation. Go on in, junior brother.”

He rushed off into the distance.

Lu Yun smiled and strode into the Hall of Soul Dominion. The building was a complete world filled with seat cushions. Disciples only needed to form a replica out of soul force to enter the rest of the world. Their primary bodies would remain in the hall.

“Junior brother Feng Feifan... has senior brother Xing Lingkong not beaten you up yet?” A light voice sounded in his ears. Lu Yun turned around to see a surprised Su He.

“...no,” he replied awkwardly. A new round of rumors had flurried when he declined to travel with Xing Lingkong ten years ago, despite the man not caring in the slightest. There was now a moving love triangle between Feng Feifan, Xing Lan, and Xing Lingkong.

Given how lazy the Star Sect seniors were, they wouldn’t put an end to gossip. Though Xing Lingkong and Xing Lan had denounced the balderdash, their voices were drowned out by hundreds of millions of disciples just on the World Star alone.

Thus, this tragic love story took on a life of its own.

Life on the World Star was very monotonous—cultivation, beatings, and gossip. The saying that a wise man does not believe rumors did not hold true in the Star Sect. In fact, it was the wise who took the farfetched stories and made them more realistic.

If it wasn’t for these fun pastimes between cultivation and beatings, quite a few disciples would likely be bored into a cultivation deviation.

“Soooooo... junior brother, who do you like? Is it senior sister Xing Lan or senior brother Xing Lingkong?” Su He’s eyes sparkled with interest. “Apparently junior brother Xing Wuliang is interfering in your love as well...”

Lu Yun wanted to faint dead away on the spot.

etvolare’s Thoughts

Can you imagine if someone started a tabloid in this sect?

Chapter 1597: The Hero Rankings of the Soul Dominion

Rumors were mightier than a tiger, but the level of gossip in the Star Sect was a little out of hand.

Though Lu Yun had spent the past ten years in closed door cultivation, he'd occasionally walked around outside and picked up many outrageous stories that were the subject of fascinated conversation after meals.

He'd turned into their main character at some point, and a love triangle was about to become a love square.

Su He teased him delightedly while those around them stared at him, occasionally roaring with laughter and filling the Hall of Soul Dominion with a cheerful mood.

"Ahem!" Lu Yun suddenly coughed and interrupted solemnly, "Senior sister Su He cares so much about this matter, can it be..." He paused and swiftly continued before the girl had a chance to respond. "It's said that when senior sister Xing Lan was still senior brother Xing Lang, she was a genteel and charming young man. She bewitched quite a few lovestruck girls, I take it that senior sister Su He was one of them!

"I heard that when senior sister Xing Lan hung senior brother Xing Lingkong up for a beating, it wasn't originally for the seat of head disciple of the Star Sect. She did it for you!"

Instead of refuting Su He's words, he made her another female lead of the story and sounded incredibly convincing at that.

Su He's jaw dropped and the other disciples in the hall perked up their ears. This was fresh fodder! While gossip was a cherished hobby in the Star Sect, the stories weren't completely groundless. They addressed inconsequential topics, but were always rooted in the tiniest bit of truth.

Now that those present heard Lu Yun's words and thought of Xing Lan and Xing Lingkong, their eyes gleamed. The addition of Su He didn't seem like hearsay!

"What, what are you babbling about?!" Su He blushed furiously, but didn't know how to deny Lu Yun's words. Her reaction lent that much more credibility to the latest twist in the story.

"So it's a love triangle... Do you like senior brother Xing Lingkong, or senior sister Xing Lan?" Lu Yun turned her previous question back on her.

"You're awful!" Su He glared furiously at Lu Yun and frantically ran off.

The young man chuckled merrily. People like her had to be handled with a taste of their own medicine. He was the best beneath the heavens when it came to being shameless!

With that, Lu Yun put the situation out of his mind and sat down on the nearest cushion.

Hummm.

A noise sounded the moment he took his seat; both person and cushion vanished at the same time. When his vision cleared, there was a vast world in front of him and he was still sitting cross legged on a seat cushion.

“Eh?” He raised his head and noted that his surroundings were the same as the Hall of Soul Dominion. However, he could clearly tell that he was no longer in the hall. “So my body’s in another patch of unknown space...”

He stood up and stretched his limbs out.

“This is a body made purely from soul force, like a soul force replica.”

It contained all of Lu Yun’s thoughts and consciousness, but could also communicate with the primary body. If he wanted to go back to his body, all he needed to do was to sit back down on the cushion.

“This soul force replica is at the major World Manifest level and its soul force is initial grandmaster.” Lu Yun briefly assessed his condition. “Soul Dominion is marvelous indeed. Apart from soul weapons, anything else unrelated to soul force cannot enter.”

Argent Snow appeared when he flipped his hand over. A tremendous amount of information flowed out from it and entered his mind.

“There are eight testing realms in Soul Dominion—Profound, Divine, Serene, Mountain and Rivers, Lunar Pivot, Aureate Wind, Argent Snow, and Azure Fog. I should be going to the Argent Snow one.”

He walked out of the hall and entered a massive clearing that he’d seen from the building. Eight enormous stone tablets rose in different directions like divine mountains. A dense collection of names were scrawled over them, and five characters of dark gold floated over them.

“The Hero Rankings of the Soul Dominion...” Lu Yun almost fell over when he read them. “Fine, as tacky as the name is, it’s very appropriate. Those who can make it onto the tablets probably count as true heroes.”

There were three thousand names on each of the tablets—the top three thousand of the eight testing realms. They included all soul weapon cultivators from the Hongmeng worlds and stars of the Boundless Planes.

Lu Yun studied the names. Anyone listed here would be a major personage of the fourth realm. He couldn’t afford to offend them yet.

“Xing Chen!” He suddenly saw a familiar name. Ninth of the Serene Ranking—Xing Chen of the Star Sect!

Lu Yun blinked with astonishment. “No wonder she’s so renowned throughout the fourth realm and half of the sect’s reputation can be attributed to her!”

Ninth on the ranking! That meant she was ranked number nine out of all supplemental grandmasters in the known and unknown expanses that trained in the Serene Annex!

However, the main caveat of these rankings was that they assessed mastery and comprehension of soul weapons. They didn’t indicate anything about actual battle strength. It was possible that number one of the rankings was just a World Manifest supplemental grandmaster.

A Nihil World Sovereign could crush ten of them with a single hand.

Lu Yun quickly recovered his composure. Grandmasters bustled to and fro in the training realms. Training and trials were a way to verify their cultivation and another locale to proceed further in their cultivation.

Soul Dominion seemed so endless that no one knew how many cultivators it could hold at a given time, but there'd never been a time when it stopped operating.

Dismissing extraneous thoughts from his mind, Lu Yun arrived in front of the Argent Snow tablet.

"The Argent Snow Hero Ranking... ranked first is Jian Zhuxian of Ingress Sword Island!" Lu Yun's eyes widened. Jian Zhuxian... sword condemn immortal... The Immortal's Condemnation Sword!

This Jian Zhuxian was likely the same as Jian Juexian, someone born understanding one of the sword daos of the island. He was the master of the immortal condemnation path. What set him apart from Jian Juexian was that he was a supplemental grandmaster and specialized in the Argent Snow soul weapon.

Lu Yun didn't know which was more important to Ingress Sword Island—soul weapons or the four swords.

"Ranked second is Sword First of the Sword Clan. No wonder Xing Chen wanted me to visit the island or clan to search for Argent Snow's heritage." Lu Yun finally understood the senior's good intentions. "The Snowsword Sect probably doesn't have Argent Snow's heritage. Xing Chen wouldn't have been able to raze it otherwise.

"But if she'd told me before that the sect doesn't have it, I wouldn't have believed her and would only think she doesn't want me to die in the ruins."

Lu Yun took a deep breath and set foot into the stone tablet in front of him.

Chapter 1598: Addicted to Beatings

Lu Yun entered a regular space that had nothing special about it. A man dressed in a silver combat outfit stood in its center, regarding him with a stern expression.

"You may pass this first level if you defeat me with the Argent Snow in your hand." The man beckoned to Lu Yun.

"You're a physical manifestation of the rules?" Lu Yun asked, in no hurry to start a fight. He'd seen this kind of manifestation before. The Talisman, Formation, Weapon, and Pill Kings of the Hongmeng were such spirits. They possessed the peak battle strength of their realm, making them stronger than the eleven potentates.

However, their state also subjected them to certain rules that forbade them from taking action as they would.

"Yes." The man nodded. "Argent Snow is one of the eight great soul weapons and suppresses a portion of order. I am the spirit of the Argent Snow order. That is enough nonsense. You will learn more about Argent Snow if you defeat me."

"Alright." Lu Yun waved the weapon in his hand, refraining from activating its power. He gripped it like a bat and smashed it down on the weapon spirit's head.

The spirit of Argent Snow matched Lu Yun's current level of strength—major World Manifest with soul force of initial grandmaster. He was a bit taken aback to see the young man use Argent Snow's physical form against him.

Challengers usually activated the weapon's power to send a flurry of snowflakes against him, utilizing their strongest moves. Today, however, this young man sought to hit him on the head with the stick itself?

The spirit of Argent Snow was very disgruntled.

He shook his hand and sent one hundred and eight snowflakes drifting through the air, forming a formation that wasn't quite a formation, a boundary that wasn't a boundary.

Lu Yun's swift movements immediately slowed, as if he'd sunk into a bog. Though the pristine snowflakes meandering through the air didn't fly with any forcefulness, they seemed to be edges of a blade all the same. They raised oscillations through the void and sliced through Lu Yun's body as they floated down from the air.

The scene wavered in front of Lu Yun and he returned to the Argent Snow tablet.

"Is that the power of Argent Snow?" he murmured to himself as he stood in front of the stone tablet.

He'd only brought a probing move to bear; he wanted to test how the power of Argent Snow differed from what Xing Heng once wielded.

It would seem that they were vastly different.

"While I can break through his Domain of First Snowfall with brute force, my skill in utilizing Argent Snow is far beneath his." Lu Yun reviewed how the one hundred and eight snowflakes hadn't stirred any destructive ripples in the air, but had been able to slice through his body nonetheless.

If they'd been in the outside world, that would've been enough to claim his life.

"Powerful supplemental grandmasters are indeed far above their peers when they utilize soul weapons." Quick analysis showed Lu Yun that while he'd deployed peak major World Manifest strength and his own combat arts just now, he'd still been killed in a single move.

"Let's try again." He stepped forward into the trial once more.

"Just now, you..."

"Eh? You remember me?" Lu Yun paused to see the spirit greet him.

"All of the spirits in this realm are my replica, so of course I remember you." The spirit rolled his eyes. "The other ones you'll meet in the trials to come will be me as well. Enough nonsense, let us continue. You'll need to deploy the strength of Argent Snow to defeat me."

He shifted forward, his body as if the weapon and raising eddies of snowflakes with his movement, manifesting the Domain of First Snowfall once more.

Lu Yun didn't spring into motion when he saw the snowflakes. He quietly observed the drifting snow and the ripples they raised. Those ripples weren't present when either he or Xing Heng used Argent Snow.

If his budding conjecture was correct, the Snowsword Sect didn't possess the true Argent Snow heritage either.

His body shattered the next second, and he once more entered the realm of trial after momentary thought.

"Why aren't you hitting back?" asked the spirit of Argent Snow. Since he was the manifestation of rules, there were no shifts of emotion from him.

"How do you create the ripples in the snowflakes?" Lu Yun asked.

"You lack the Argent Snow legacy?" the spirit countered instead.

"Yes." Lu Yun nodded.

"Then you might comprehend it after suffering a few more beatings." The spirit made his move again and churned Lu Yun to pieces with one hundred and eight snowflakes.

This was Lu Yun's third return to the stone tablet. Formula dao simulated everything he'd experienced and how the spirit had utilized spirit force when he made his move.

He was so strong that Lu Yun's formula dao could only capture the barest hint.

"If I can't capture even the ripples of the first level in the first domain, the others will be much harder," Lu Yun mused.

"I say, friend, you've gone in and out three times. Can you do it or not?" came a mystified voice behind Lu Yun. "If you fail the trials a couple times in a row, you better go back to closed door cultivation or you'll suffer an extreme blow to your confidence."

Lu Yun turned back to see a chubby young man regarding him with curiosity.

"Friend, how many levels have you passed?" the young man asked.

"Not even the first level of the first domain," Lu Yun responded truthfully.

"...ahem!" The young man coughed awkwardly and didn't know how to respond.

"Thank you for your reminder, senior brother. I shall now continue." Raising cupped fists to the young man, Lu Yun once more set foot into the trial.

Curiosity flashed through the chubby young man's eyes. "That is indeed the first level of the first domain... Strange, that guy's strength is obviously at a higher level, so it shouldn't be difficult for him to pass this one. So why..."

Lu Yun's body appeared once more before the chubby young man could finish his thoughts. This time, he only looked curiously at Lu Yun instead of addressing him.

Lu Yun's eyes were shut tight as he used formula dao to analyze the strength that the spirit of Argent Snow had brought to bear. After eighteen breaths, he set foot into the trial with his eyes still closed.

He reappeared after two more breaths, then entered again. Back and forth and back and forth, he tried a couple hundred times.

The young man's cheek spasmed.

"Hoi, friend! What are you doing? Are you addicted to beatings?" He grabbed Lu Yun.

"I'm a Star Sect disciple, a few beatings is nothing." Lu Yun shook his head—his formula dao had finally grasped a wisp of the spirit's motions. There was the true heritage of Argent Snow inside that wisp. Though it wasn't complete and wasn't even a full technique, he would quickly be able to determine more thanks to formula dao.

Chapter 1599: Foul

"Star Sect, huh?" The chubby young man paused when he heard Lu Yun's self introduction, then raised his thumb in admiration. "No wonder..."

The Star Sect was a renowned major sect and the sacred land of supplemental dao in the Boundless Planes. Incidentally, its disciples were known for their eccentric tempers. They quietly suffered through beatings or humiliation, but later responded from the shadows with an unexpected and fatal blow.

They also particularly liked to spread rumors—half of the gossip in the known expanses originated from Star Sect disciples. Although everyone knew it was just hearsay, people still liked to believe what they heard.

That there was Argent Snow heritage in the ruins of the Snowsword Sect, for instance, was one that even Star Sect disciples believed without a doubt.

Their eccentricity was most on display in Soul Dominion.

Star Sect disciples paid no heed to their lives when they trained. Everyone else went back home when they failed, attempting another try only after they reflected on their flaws and bad habits. Instead of following that course of action, the sect's disciples immediately tried again and again when they failed. There was once a madman who cultivated for three thousand years in Soul Dominion, finally forcing his way through after failing countless times.

Any other faction's disciples would've lost their temper, patience, and confidence halfway through. In other words, Star Sect disciples were afraid of anything but a beating.

The chubby young man understood everything when he heard where Lu Yun was from.

"It's said that the Star Sect's old folks are super lazy, that it's the senior brothers and sisters who beat their juniors into shape..." He couldn't help mumbling when he saw the Star Sect disciple in front of him head back in. He remained where he was instead of leaving for his own business.

Somehow, the chubby youngster felt that this Star Sect disciple was different from the others. Other sect disciples threw themselves into the trials with a streak of lunacy in their eyes, but this one always quietly took a dozen breaths before he tried again.

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"Are you going to make a move this time?" The spirit of Argent Snow flickered with a hint of emotion when he saw Lu Yun return.

"I still haven't seen it clearly." The young man raised the weapon like a bat once more and rushed the spirit.

The spirit waved a hand and sent one hundred and eight snowflakes flurrying through the air, churning toward Lu Yun in a whirlwind of death. This time, the young man didn't allow the snowflakes to cut him down as they would. He shifted one step to the side, perfectly evading the snowflakes and standing in a blind spot from the attack.

He subconsciously bent down to observe a snowflake drifting past his nose. It was crystalline and translucent, watery ripples oscillating over its surface to create a magnificent snow scene. A hint of killing intent wrapped around it.

Lu Yun suddenly reached out and grasped the snowflake.

The spirit's expression changed noticeably and he waved his hand again, dismissing the snowflake in the young man's hand and turning it into a massive ripple that pierced through the void.

Lu Yun's body shattered.

"Did that count as violating the rules?" The spirit paused as he looked at the dead challenger. "That blow was from the fourth domain of Argent Snow."

.....

"Foul! You fouled!" Lu Yun shouted outside at the top of his lungs. "You're supposed to be using only the Domain of First Snowfall, and its first level at that! But you just used power beyond Domain of Eventide Snow!"

He almost danced in his anger. He'd evaded the snowflakes, grabbed one of them, operated formula dao, and was about to derive the profound mysteries of that ripple when the spirit interrupted him.

The chubby young man jumped with surprise to hear Lu Yun's yell. The other challengers around them also froze when they heard his words.

"Bro... brother, what did you just say? Who fouled?" the chubby youngster couldn't help his curiosity.

"...eh, nothing. I've suffered one too many blows to the head and I'm not thinking right." Lu Yun came back to his senses with an awkward smile.

"Is that even possible for Star Sect disciples?" asked the mystified youngster before a furious Lu Yun charged back in.

.....

"Foul! That was a foul!" Lu Yun roared at the spirit. "I was so close to understanding the ripple!"

The spirit looked innocently at him.

"So tell me, how are you going to compensate me?!" Lu Yun seemed very angry, but a bit of amusement sparkled in his eyes.

“How do you want me to compensate you?” The spirit continued to be very innocent. He had indeed broken the rules with his last blow and used strength beyond this level to kill the challenger.

While it didn’t follow the rules of trial, there was no one who could punish him for his transgression.

“Heh heh heh...” Lu Yun broke out in a broad grin. “You have the heritage of Argent Snow, don’t you? Teach me the part for Domain of First Snowfall and we’ll call it even.”

Seemingly in thought, the spirit stroked his chin before responding, “That will do, but you must pass the twenty-seventh level first.”

“You’ll give me the true heritage if I pass the twenty-seventh level?” Lu Yun’s eyes brightened.

“Don’t play word games with me, I said I’ll give you Domain of First Snowfall,” rebuffed the spirit. “Since I made you waste some time by breaking the rules, I’ll tell you a bit more. The first three domains and eighty-one levels of the Argent Snow trials correspond to the Domains of First Snowfall, of Glorious Snowdrift, and of Eventide Snow.

“If you can pass them all, that means you’ve reached perfection in all three. But just on the surface.”

“There’s more?” Lu Yun blinked.

“Yes, there’s more.” The spirit nodded. He patiently explained the rest to Lu Yun, not minding the use of time. He had tens of millions of replicas and could oversee several million trials at the same time.

“The Domain of First Snowfall, for instance, reaches perfection in the twenty-seventh level. That is still not its peak. If you can reach the twenty-eighth level, that will land you among true budding mastery of Argent Snow.

“But if you wish to reach the twenty-eighth level, just your Three Thousand Soul Daos is insufficient. If you can make your way through twenty-seven levels on your current attempt, I’ll give you the true cultivation method—Argent Snow’s heritage.”

Whoosh!

A silver stick appeared in the spirit’s hand—Argent Snow.

Lu Yun imitated his motion; snowflakes drifted thickly in front of him.

Chapter 1600: Sword Thirteen

Identical ripples oscillated over one hundred and eight pristine snowflakes. They melded into the air, too subtle to be distinguished from one another.

Rumble—

Explosions boomed from the void like thunder as two hundred and sixty-five snowflakes crashed against each other.

Lu Yun walked through the air and raised Argent Snow, bringing it down on the spirit’s head. The latter vanished in a state of stunned shock, soon followed by the disappearance of his Domain of First Snowfall.

A silver bridge appeared in front of Lu Yun.

“This means I pass, right?” Lu Yun retracted his own domain and set foot onto the bridge.

The spirit stood at the end and greeted him with an unwelcome glare.

“You just wouldn’t give it a rest if you didn’t hit me on the head with the stick, would you?” he huffed.

“Nope.” Lu Yun shook his head. “And it’s not just hitting you on the head once, either, but twenty-seven times. There’s twenty-six times left!”

One hundred and eight snowflakes appeared around him again, all undulating with the same oscillation. Though he hadn’t grasped the true heritage within the snowflakes, he’d found the secrets to the mysteries of their ripples. With his powers of comprehension, being able to understand something was to use it for his own purposes.

He could already access the third domain of Argent Snow, so the trial of the first domain wasn’t very difficult for him.

Of course, just because he could deploy the third domain didn’t mean he’d perfected his mastery of it. If it wasn’t for his grasp of the ripples, he would find it very difficult to advance after the twentieth level.

At the same time, formula dao constantly analyzed himself and the combat arts of the spirit in front of him. He continued to improve in everything he did and constantly strove for great perfection.

Though the Tome of Life and Death hadn’t come with his soul force, it could still affect his replica since it was his nascent spirit.

The soul force replica was one with the primary body.

When Lu Yun practiced supplemental dao, he’d been able to swiftly become one of the foremost supplemental kings of the world of immortals and Hongmeng due to the abilities of the treasure.

Books were the medium of civilization, and living beings cultivated civilization—no matter the school of thought or dao.

.....

Lu Yun easily passed through the second level of the Domain of First Snowfall. Once again, he smashed the spirit to death with a single blow to the head. However, that only came about after facing off his opponent for more than a hundred breaths.

Both sides utilized the first domain of Argent Snow and Lu Yun slowly derived the truth behind the domain through the exchanges. He didn’t allow himself to pass until he got a handle on certain concepts.

Then the third level, fourth, fifth...

When he reached the tenth level, the spirit’s Domain of First Snowfall underwent a certain shift. The one hundred and eight snowflakes turned into three hundred and sixty-five, forming a marvelous formation instead of just Domain of First Snowfall.

Lu Yun brought out the same formation as well, deploying three hundred and sixty-five snowflakes to battle the spirit.

.....

“Strange... so very strange... Does that kid have some kind of unnatural dealing with the spirit of Argent Snow?” The chubby youngster’s curiosity bloomed uncontrollably when Lu Yun didn’t reemerge from the stone tablet.

“Sword Thirteen, what are you doing here?” A young girl in purple walked out from the nearby Aureate Wind tablet and regarded him curiously.

“I met an interesting fellow who couldn’t make it past the first level. But, he hasn’t come out from his latest attempt and it’s been a while,” the chubby Sword Thirteen mumbled. “I only know that he’s from the Star Sect, I haven’t had a chance to ask his name. How about you, Sword Feather? Are you confident of making it onto the ranking?”

“I was so close to passing the one hundred and eighth level of the third domain. I’m going back to closed door cultivation and will probably pass it next time. But that level alone is still not enough for the Hero Ranking.” Sword Feather pursed her lips. “Star Sect disciples are all a bunch of crazies. What are you doing with one of them? It’s just a waste of time.

“Of their younger generation, only that Xing Lang—er, Xing Lan is worthy of any notice. The rest of them are trash. At least their previous head disciple knew himself well enough to relinquish his position. Otherwise, a head disciple who can’t even make it onto the ranking would be the biggest joke of them all.”

Though Xing Lingkong had made it past the eighty-first level of Argent Snow’s third domain, he was still complete trash in the girl’s eye. She’d made it to the one hundred and eighth level, and not that of the combined domain, but the one after the pivotal twenty-seventh level that the Argent Snow spirit had said was the division of great perfection.

“That’s different.” Sword Thirteen shook his head. “The Star Sect doesn’t have the Argent Snow inheritance. Xing Lingkong making it to the third domain through just the Three Thousand Soul Daos is incredibly terrifying. If he possessed the legacy, he’d immediately barge into the supreme domain.

“Their Star Sovereign King entered the ancient past in a dream and can derive the imperceptible strands of fate. None of their disciples can be easily dismissed!

“It won’t be long before one of them comes to our Sword Clan for the inheritance.”

Sword Thirteen and the young girl in purple were all disciples of the incomparably mysterious Sword Clan. Their true forms were living beings manifested from connate divine swords.

“We’re supposed to give it to them just because they want it?” Sword Feather grumbled.

“That’s up to the elders of the clan, what does it have to do with us? Plus, the Star Sect doesn’t want anything from us and has no conflict with us. In the Boundless Planes, one friend more is better than one more enemy,” Sword Thirteen chuckled. “Besides, what other faction have you seen the younger disciples beat up their elders from time to time?”

He lifted his head to look at the names on the Argent Snow Hero Ranking. His was listed at number one hundred.

.....

In the twenty-sixth level of the first domain, one thousand and eighty snowflakes swirled around Lu Yun's soul force replica; it teetered on the edge of collapse. He managed to walk up to the spirit and smash it to death with one hit of the stick.

The bridge to the twenty-seventh level appeared in front of him; he set foot onto it without another thought. His replica was instantly repaired the moment he reached the next level.

"Your strength doesn't seem strong enough to pass this level." The spirit appeared with a supercilious smile. "I had seven chances to go down with you in the prior level, but you managed to evade all of them. I can utilize the full strength of Domain of First Snowfall in this level. You'll have no further chances of escape."

"Alright, I take back what I said earlier," Lu Yun said with resignation.

"What, do you want to give up?" the spirit asked with a smile.

"Yes, I'm giving up smacking you to death with the stick. This time, I'll beat you fair and square." Lu Yu's eyes blazed with a serious look.

The spirit:

etvolare's Thoughts

Aha, no wonder their names are like that. And okay, I'm beginning to pity the spirit.